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The Commonweal

January 19, 1951

SMOLDERING VOLCANO

Another Berlin Diary

ERIK VON KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN

WOMAN'S PLACE

The Mullah and His Wives

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

SUBVERSION IN THE CIO

Menace of the Guest Speaker

JOHN C. CORT

Volume LIII **15c** *Number 15*

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Idea for a Magazine III

THIS then is the first thing which should be required of a Catholic periodical: that, basically, it should not suggest to the non-Catholic, or even to the non-believing reader, that it is written for the chosen, so to speak, for the saved, but also for all the others who do not yet live in the truth but who still search for it.

It is not quite easy to explain this difference to those who regard Catholicism as party politics, and who therefore from the beginning take a sectarian and a polemical attitude.

Perhaps it would be a good thing to avoid the word Catholicism altogether, because that makes it look like an ism, while the very idea of the Catholic Church, as such, should make it difficult from the beginning to represent Catholicism as a party matter. . . .

A Catholic periodical must never have a complacent tone nor a condescending or pharisaical undertone towards those who are not in possession of the truth—the truth that we ourselves have merely inherited. For a Catholic periodical, too, has to search for the truth, which is its prerequisite.

FRANZ JOSEF SCHOENINGH
Editor of Hochland

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

From the League to the UN

HAS man progressed or lost ground, during the past two decades, in his quest for collective security, his uncertain strivings for world government? The League of Nations handled a number of minor political crises in its first twelve years; then Japan marched into Manchuria in 1931. After this flagrant act of aggression the League sustained further blows. It failed to stop the Gran Chaco war of 1932-5, decreed economic sanctions against Mussolini in 1935 to little avail, and allowed Hitler to embark on his world-shaking series of conquests. Somehow, in 1939, it mustered the strength to expel the USSR for invading Finland. The League lived on (formally) until 1946 and even moved into an imposing new palace in Geneva shortly before its demise.

The UN, which has succeeded the League, has been operating for scarcely five years. It has been bedeviled from the start by Russian obstructionism. At first the Soviet objective appeared to be to consume the utmost quantity of time in deliberately footless discussions, while the USSR speedily made and consolidated a striking succession of new territorial conquests.

In more recent months Russian blocking tactics have been aimed more directly at preventing specific UN actions than at using up valuable time. On more than forty occasions the USSR has resorted to the veto.

Last June, the Security Council was able to take action against the North Korean aggressors thanks to a Soviet walk-out. When the UN armies finally succeeded in repelling the invaders and driving them back beyond the point of the original attack, the United Nations Organization attained the summit of its prestige. It seemed that for the first time in history a worldwide organization to preserve peace had turned back armed aggression.

As soon as Chinese troops started pouring across the Yalu River from Manchuria, however, UN forces had to go into full retreat. Two months after this tragic turnabout they are still badly outnumbered and withdrawing southward. Although fifty-three nations voted to support the UN in Korea, the eleven which sent contingents into the battle supplied but 24,000 men in all, the equivalent of about half the American casualties. Time was limited and few nations had expeditionary forces available; the difficulties of integrating large bodies of troops with varying backgrounds into the MacArthur forces would, in any event, have been extreme. Yet the small scale of these contributions indicates the amount of faintheartedness about the whole Korean affair.

Now that the predominantly US-South Korean force is steadily being pushed back to final ports of embarkation, the timidity of the bulk of the UN membership increases. Although the ceasefire committee appointed by the General Assembly has not yet succeeded even in starting a conversation with the Chinese Communists, the UN continues to defer action on the Chinese aggression.

Moreover, the fear is that so many members would abstain from voting to brand the Chinese Communists as aggressors that a vote should not be called for—even for the record. The implementing of such a resolution by economic or diplomatic sanctions is unthinkable at this stage, much as it is desired by the United States.

AND so the UN, like the League but in much shorter order, has shown its inability to deal with a major crisis. Despite improved machinery, sufficient common will has not animated the individual members.

But much has now been made plain. National sovereignties must give way to the extent that no one nation or tiny minority of nations can thwart the wishes of the great majority by veto. An effective international organization also requires

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• NEXT WEEK •

CLARA MENCK reports from Western Germany what the people there think about their country's rearmament.

The people supported Dr. Adenauer when he hesitated to talk over unification with the East Zone Germans. "But undoubtedly a West German radio commentator accurately expressed the state of popular opinion when he gave this as an objective for German politics: to act in such a way that neither the Americans nor the Russians go westward."

sufficient well-equipped armed forces at hand to deter the sort of adventure that invariably presents the great difficulty—aggression by a major power.

The bitter experience of Korea does at least provide certain guideposts for the yet untraversed road to genuine collective security.

Religious Tensions

A NOTRE DAME professor, John J. Kane, addressing the Catholic Sociological Society convention in Chicago, said: "There is a current suspicion that Protestant - Catholic relationships in the United States are again shifting in the direction of conflict." Professor Kane cited the commercial success of Paul Blanshard's book, the founding of Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the legislation preventing Catholic Sisters from teaching in the public schools while wearing their religious habits, and the increase of critical articles in even such non-baiting publications as the Protestant *Christian Century* and the Catholic *America* (which the same week published an article calling for greater unity, written by a Protestant minister).

Kane's remarks were widely publicized, and it is good they were because they may lead publicists and spokesmen for both groups, Protestant and Catholic, to be more careful about slugging it out in public. Everyone dreads the prospect of religious antagonisms bursting into flame in this country—or anywhere else for that matter—and it would seem the part of responsible leaders to put their efforts in the opposite direction.

There are, it is true, irreconcilable differences between men of different religions, and there is no use pretending otherwise. There may even be a good purpose served now and then in airing these differences on the public platform and in the pages of responsible journals. But even this is something that calls for infinite tact, sensitivity to the feelings and honest beliefs of others and inexhaustible patience. The bull-in-the-china-shop approach has time and again proved to do more harm than good even for the cause of the true and good that it passionately defends.

Yet it is not so much religious differences themselves that cause tensions as the unfounded suspicions and antagonisms that exist between members of the separate groups. One can only surmise how great a part is played by devotion

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to the truth in these ruckuses and how much to group pride. How many battles have been fought for the sheer sake of the victory itself?

The solution seems to be a greater charity and greater forbearance on the part of both groups. As Father Vincent J. Flynn wrote last year: "Life, as someone has said, consists in a series of relationships with other persons. The relationships are not between ideas; they are between human beings. Now it is quite possible for me to love a man while hating his ideas. You will find no real unity in a body of men without charity. Differences and disagreements will exist even in the best of families. But I appeal to your experience: where love is present, agreement can usually be reached—at least in the field of action, if not that of opinion. Where love is not present, no unity is likely."

In the area of ideas and beliefs, it is impossible to reconcile the irreconcilable. But it is possible, if the need for controversy arises, to avoid the insulting tone, the unwarranted assumption, the gratuitous slur. It is possible to exercise tact, personal charity, thoughtful consideration of the other man's arguments, his sensibilities and his sincerity.

On the level of community social action, the field is wide open. If the social order in this country is to be reconstructed, if the United States is to be made a better place to live, neither Protestants alone nor Catholics alone can do the job. Cooperation between them is not only desirable, it is a Christian necessity.

Recently a prominent Protestant leader told us that in a lifetime of experience he never saw it to fail that a group of Protestants and Catholics, if left alone, could not agree on a program for positive community action. The same man, speaking of the herculean labors of the Catholic Rural Life Conference's Monsignor Luigi Ligutti, who has long cooperated heartily with Protestant leaders on a variety of social programs, said, in homely tribute: "Monsignor Ligutti is worth a million dollars a day to the Catholic Church in promoting good feeling and understanding."

Monsignor Ligutti is only one man. There are others, on both sides—and may their tribe increase! The cause of American democracy and of Christianity itself is strengthened by their efforts. That can hardly be said of the superpatriotic Paul Blanshards or of the super-Catholic, super-suspicious, chip-on-the-shoulder defenders of the faith, whose genius seems to be in keeping things going from bad to worse.

Complexion of the 82nd

DOMESTIC reforms of a Fair Dealing sort will be so curtailed by the pressure of the national emergency that the complexion of the new Congress makes less difference regarding internal matters than was expected early in November. It is in the Senate, with its Democratic majority of two and its complement of a dozen conservative Democrats from the South, that a stalemate would have been most galling for the President. There are no prospects now for civil rights and nationwide medical insurance; the Administration can be counted on for little more than a verbal reminder to the voters that it still espouses both causes. No fight is to develop over either one.

The selection of Senators Ernest W. McFarland of Arizona and Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas as majority leader and party whip makes this plain. For they were the choice of the conservative twelve over such consistent Fair Dealers as Senators O'Mahoney of Wyoming and Sparkman of Alabama. As a middle-of-the-roader Senator McFarland may prove to be a happy choice at a time when national unity is paramount.

There are also indications from his background and his legislative record that the new majority leader will push domestic legislation furthering conservation and development of natural resources. Senator McFarland grew up on an Oklahoma farm and knows from direct experience the importance of irrigation. As a judge in Arizona he long interested himself in cases dealing with water rights.

Except for civil rights bills he has supported the bulk of Fair Deal legislation. So in a period of economizing on everything that does not contribute directly to defense, he can be counted on to use his new influence and the prestige of his party post to further new and continuing land projects of a constructive nature. Mr. Truman should be able to view domestic legislation as one of the quieter sectors in the 82nd Congress.

Illusions

WHILE many Americans in and out of Congress are busy arguing the question of where and how to fight the next war, if it is to come, there are others among us, of an historical turn of mind, who are busy notifying the country

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that as things have turned out in the last five years it is now painfully clear that this nation fought World War II with, and for, a set of illusions. It was, we are told, an illusion to have fought alongside Russia expecting that she would be a cooperative ally of the democracies; instead we have found out that her intentions were all the while circumspect and calculating. It was an illusion to have thought that we could demilitarize, neutralize or make political vacuums of Germany and Japan, when those countries were all along Russia's coveted objectives. It was an illusion to have fought a war against Prussian militarism only to have ended up adopting peacetime conscription ourselves—the very mark of the garrison state. And so on. "This," says William Henry Chamberlin, "is the sorry aftermath of the crusade that was supposed to enthrone the four freedoms 'everywhere in the world.'"

As is usually the case with hindsight, there is considerable truth, if by no means the whole truth, in this rather cynical reconstruction of the past. The important thing now, however, is the future, and perhaps it behooves us, as we prepare to resist a possible attack, to rid ourselves of any illusions about what we are doing.

As an example of one source of illusion, we would cite the fact that at the moment we find ourselves in the company of Marshal Tito, General Franco and Chiang Kai-shek in a loose, anti-Moscow working-agreement that is slowly taking shape around the world. It would obviously be an illusion for us to think that because a common interest—survival—puts these three gentlemen on our side, that they will marvelously become a trio of knights in shining armor. But neither can we afford the perfectionist illusion that alliances should be made only among angels. As in the past, we will simply have to make our way and preserve our ideals in the real world of imperfect humanity.

Of all the illusions about war, probably the two basic ones are the extreme and opposite illusions to the effect that war solves nothing or that war solves everything. To say that it solves nothing is to be hard put to explain the disappearance of Herr Hitler. To say that it solves everything is to forget the history of the last five years. War, after all, is not meant to solve things: it is meant to create a condition in society in which man can solve things politically and peacefully. War is the breakdown of society and it is always an illusion to think that man is making peace when he is making war. He is simply restoring a condition of peace in the world; peace-making really begins with the armistice and it is an illusion to think otherwise.

If the Christian, contemplating warfare today, is, as he must be, agonized at the possibility of its becoming an immoral warfare, so the unbeliever, the secularist, contemplating all the possible illusions of modern warfare, must know that he cannot complacently put his trust for a peaceful world in the weapons of mass-incineration. What both believer and unbeliever are endeavoring to do now, in the great national debate and in the inner debate of conscience, is to find a way to resist the totalitarian police-state, whose underlying assumption is that war, a perpetual war on man himself, is the normal condition of society. Of that, at least, we no longer have illusions.

Paying for It All

EARLY NEXT month the House Ways and Means Committee will go into the whole problem of raising enough revenue to meet the seventy-five billion dollar budget which the present situation demands. There are two main schools of thought in Congress. One would be rigorous about paying as we go because of the inflationary pressures and increasing burden on postwar finances which result from increases in the national debt. The other assumes that the United States is "taxing till it hurts" now, considering recent increases in corporation and personal income taxes. According to this second group the only way for the nation to finance this war is to borrow whatever present higher tax schedules are unable to supply.

There are obvious limits to business and income tax rates. What can be realized by upping excise taxes for luxuries and amusements is limited too. Consequently there is much talk now about a general sales tax and a tax on every business transaction. Sales taxes have the disadvantage of not being correlated with ability to pay; they fall hardest on families with low incomes. On the other hand, they do have a strong effect in arousing citizens to the reality of a national crisis and they might provide the added revenue necessary to pay as we go at the present state of mobilization. People do not mind paying little by little through sales taxes nearly as much as taking a bigger cut out of the weekly pay envelope. Some new taxation of this kind is politically feasible. It would provide some hedge against further inflation.

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Another Berlin Diary

Five days in the city where East meets West.

By ERIK VON KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN

MONDAY.

THE first shock we received after our arrival in Berlin was the sight of the Templehof Airfield with its colossal and undamaged buildings wrapped in a curious silence and desolation. In the old days and during the weeks and months of the blockade it was a place of feverish activity. But now this vast agglomeration of offices, hangars and spacious halls extends in senseless solitude, like a stranded whale. Driving from there to our hotel in the Dahlem suburb we passed through a minimum of traffic and only very occasionally noted signs of reconstruction. The hotel itself, run by the American Army for official visitors, is not far from the edge of the Western sectors—at the shores, I would say, of this Western Island in the Soviet ocean. The whole set-up there—PX's, mess halls, barracks, snack bars, officers' residences, US post offices, etc. —is typical of the American settlement in Europe. One sees American uniforms and also the furtive, uneasy faces of the German civilians in American service, the marked men and women who will be the first to be put against a wall if the island is flooded by the waters of the Red ocean.

And yet, even after the first perfunctory contacts with the natives one senses the enormous changes Berlin underwent in the last decade. To an Austrian it seems unbelievable that the old type Berliner is dead or has disappeared. The arrogant, aggressive, disagreeably sharp Berliner has gone or has been mysteriously transformed into a slow, pensive, polite and almost whimsical person who has shown more stamina and even more greatness than his critics ever suspected.

The hardships of the blockade in many cases were similar to those endured by the people of Leningrad during its siege. The electric light was on only three hours every day, and this at different periods. Electricity being the only means of heating or cooking, people had sometimes to get up at midnight in order to prepare their meals. Yet the offer of the Soviets in the Eastern Sector to honor fully the ration cards of the besieged West Berliners only seduced three percent into crossing the zonal lines. Most preferred to starve and freeze rather than accept gifts from the accursed enemy. And the three percent were probably convinced Communists.

The traces of the earlier catastrophe are visible especially around the Tiergarten, the large park in the heart of Berlin. Endless ruins, partly shattered by artillery fire and partly by aerial bombs, are mirrored in the quiet waters of its Landwehrkanal. There is something at once majestic and sad about these ruins with their fronts often still standing and their interiors burnt out. The Victory Alley in the Tiergarten is no more and the solitary monument of Bismarck, which the war in its mockery left standing, hardly conveys a note of victory and conquest. There are a few Berliners who take a stroll in this vast park whose most grievous wounds are starting to heal, yet their voices are soft, their step slow, their clothes drab. The gilded angel on the top of the Sedan-column receives the last rays of a pale sun and then the long-drawn twilight of the North sets in. The huge concrete air-raid shelters dynamited by the British in 1947 (!) and lying there half turned over on the meadows are silent symbols that the illusions of an everlasting peace had a tenacious life in Western capitals.

Brilliantly clever was the political show we saw late at night in a cabaret near the ruins of the Emperor William Memorial Church. The special targets of the humor were: the Americans, the British, the Russians, Democracy, Communism, the neo-Nazi. More could be learned here in one hour than during a month's stay in Germany. And highly significant were the recurrent allusions to the idea that Nazism and the Soviet system in the Eastern Zone are two aspects of one and the same thing.

★

TUESDAY.

FIRST visit to the East-Sector. We marched through the Tiergarten past the enormous monument erected to the Unknown Soldier of the Red Army (nicknamed the Unknown Rapist by the inhabitants) and passed the Brandenburger Tor. Yet before we reached the end of the pave-

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ment we had an interesting sample of Western ineptitude. There we were faced by a huge trilingual inscription: *"Now you are leaving the British Sector,"* after which we were greeted by a board embellished with the German colors and the German text: *"Now you are entering democratic Germany."* Thus an effort is made to give the impression that a region suffering from a military occupation is left behind and a fair country of freedom and national independence is receiving a friend. The truth is just the other way round.

But this matters very little. Actually the visitor walking down the Unter den Linden and then through the Friedrichsstrasse steps into an entirely different world. Not only are the people more shabbily dressed, not only is the reconstruction work even less evident than in the Western Sectors, but the whole atmosphere is utterly strange. There is a whiff of Muscovite severity and poverty in the air and the Vopo ("People's Police") go around in pairs usually accompanied by large hounds—Alsatians, bloodhounds, dobermanns. There is a ubiquity about the police which gives us who have no legal papers to enter the Eastern Zone a rather uncomfortable feeling. A minor accident, a sudden suspicion and one has to show an identification card which we foreigners are unable to produce. After all, from the point where it says "You are entering democratic Germany" up to Big Diomede Island in the Bering-Straits there is only one empire, the grey realm of the Red Czars. And if one is found holding West-Marks, or a West-Sector newspaper or foreign currency he is charged with a major crime.

Yet studying the faces of the Vopo-men one has the frightful feeling that one has seen them before and if one chances upon a marching group of the Freie Deutsche Jugend—the Free German Youth, which is anything but free—one knows exactly what sort of forces are being harnessed again. The trouble is that these forces are not only those of hatred, spite and herd-instincts but also of self-sacrifice, comradeship and courage. The old Nazi experiment is repeated: the marshalling of certain virtues and even of noble sentiments for the service of colossal vices and the cause of absolute inhumanity.

Back in the Western Sector in the afternoon we had a long talk with a recent refugee from the Eastern Zone. Communism, he said, made very little (if any) headway among those above the age of 22 or 23 and the ex-servicemen who had been to Russia were perfectly immune. The endangered ones were those in the late teens unless they belonged to profoundly religious families. "Is this the case even in the East Sector of Berlin?" "Quite so," was the answer, "and don't you believe that the intimate contacts with the West have any particular influence on the youngsters. Of course, there is here no problem whatsoever in walking from the 'West' to the 'East' or vice-versa. But your American friends harbor the illusion that the much higher living standards in the Western Sectors of this city serve as an argument in their favor. American propaganda is all based on the comparison of living standards, of wages and prices, on the production of commodities and their availability. This is a tremendous mistake. Our youth is idealistic, and the argument of the full belly just doesn't catch.

"I remember my own reactions after I fled from Leipzig to the Eastern Sector of Berlin and then set foot for the first time in the 'West.' I felt somehow like one of those few Germans who were able to visit Switzerland back in 1946 or '47. It was all sinful luxury, temptation, criminal ostentation. There is the feeling that all these niceties one can buy in the West are just gifts from the wealthy and mighty American protectorate, that the Federal Republic displays the dishonestly acquired riches of the kept woman. So with its material aspects alone, the West does not convince. In Eastern Berlin young people may resist manfully the tyranny of the SED, they loathe the Russians, but they have little respect for their Western co-nationals."

★

WEDNESDAY.

WE went again to the East Sector. The subway travels swiftly from the Nollendorfplatz and while we get near the Potsdamerplatz the people slowly, one by one, put down their newspapers and place them on an empty seat. After they cross the invisible demarkation line they will not be caught reading a Western paper. Only about one-third of the travelers stay after the Kurfürstenstrasse-Station. We also leave the train at the Potsdamerplatz. Of this square about three-quarters belongs to the Democratic Republic, one-third to the Federal Republic. This is the navel of an area where "East meets West" and large crowds of people cross over to the "free quarter" where food can be obtained in makeshift wooden huts and stands. Though the Western Mark must be bought in the relationship of 5.50 to 1, there is a widespread demand for chocolate, cigarettes, sausages, cheese and other delicacies. Yet the real attraction of the Potsdamerplatz for the East-Berliners is a high metal structure from which the combined newspapers of West Berlin are flashing their latest news. The glowing letters could be seen all along the Leipzigerstrasse, the main artery of the Eastern Sector's shopping center. The Soviet Germans have erected another structure opposite. A broad band in the right altitude, obstructing the view, bears the prosaic inscription "The intelligent Berliner

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buys at the shops of the Commercial Organization (H. O.)."

Of course, if they have a radio they can turn on station RIAS and stay at home. The trouble is that RIAS sometimes lays it on a bit thick. The Soviets have the advantage in propaganda. They slip in the paralyzing though subtle menaces in which they are such great masters. The Communist in the West can always count on the tolerance of the Occident's liberal tradition, while the anti-Communist on *either* side of the Iron Curtain has always to reckon with the triple nightmare of extermination, expropriation and exile.

Over the few rebuilt houses along the Leipzigerstrasse streamers with white letters on a red background can be seen: *"This building has been reconstructed by the sweat and toil of German workers. We want no fresh ruins!"* Another one maintains: *"We fight for the unity of Germany, for peace everlasting and happiness for all!"* There is an odd mixture of hysteria and the expectation of some sort of millenium just round the corner. Yet the faces of the masses betray apathy rather than any other sentiment. The recurrent poster with the caricature of two American soldiers and the words "Ami Go Home!" are seen again and again . . . an empty gesture since no American soldiers venture into the Eastern Sector, apart from the fact that there are soldiers of an entirely different nation which the East Germans want to disappear. There is hardly a single word printed or officially uttered in the Eastern Zone which is true to fact, conveys real feelings or has an intimate connection with reality. In the fantastic world of the German Democratic Republic, which is neither German nor democratic nor even a republic, heroism, madness and hypocrisy are entering into a curious alliance.

★

THURSDAY.

BEFORE leaving we had another short jaunt into the Eastern Sector, which exercises some sort of evil fascination. We saw a demonstration of the FDJ with boys and young women headed by leaders blowing lustily into bugles which are obviously relics from the Nazi HJ. The something new which has been added are merely blue shirts instead of brown ones and a far greater intermingling of the sexes in the procession. There was an aura of erotic polarity, of death and hunger, about these marching youngsters who perhaps had less of the bovine stodginess than Hitler-Youth, were less well-fed and reminded one of Hermann Hesse's "Wolf of the Steppes." All the lean wolves of the Sarmatian steppes ran symbolically behind them, all the lean horses of the Asiatic plains, all the howling winds from the tundras and taigas of Siberia.

In the afternoon we drank tea in the home of a bookseller-publisher who has his shop and office in the Eastern Sector but who prefers to live in the West, way down in Zehlendorf. He is not a Communist but a "straddler" who flatly refuses to take sides. Whatever criticisms you have about the Eastern Zone he is quite willing to accept, but he tries to cancel them out by accounts of shortcomings in the West. You sense all the time that he is a wishful thinker and that he knows it in the depths of his heart. His wife, less clever than he, senses instinctively that he is wrong. Finally we bring up the case of a well-known pianist who commuted between the zones but was kidnapped by the MVD only a week ago. Again he tries to exculpate the criminals. "Berlin is just brimming with spies," he insists. "It is the world's biggest espionage center. The Russians would not possibly arrest and deport a man without good reason. They certainly would not endanger their prestige. . . ." He could not continue because his wife interrupted him: "There's no excuse," she shouted with tears in her eyes. "It's just vile and disgusting and horrible and inhuman. I know Frau R. and she is crazy with fear and despair." He looked at her with a sudden hardness and severity. It was a minor marital row. Yet in his eyes one could also read guilt. Guilt and helplessness.

Late at night in bed I was pursued by the picture of the publisher. The 38th Parallel goes right through his tortured soul. Impossible to determine whether he is just a straddler driven by economic motives or a naive "bridge-builder," a German desperately trying to preserve ties between the two Germanies which rapidly drift apart.

★

FRIDAY.

TODAY we are leaving Berlin. This means good-bye to the island in the Red Ocean and to the island-in-the-island, the American "establishment" in the Dahlem suburb, with its US mail and US stores, its US snack-bars, movie-houses, barber shops and beauty parlors, messhalls and cocktail lounges, kindergartens and USO centers; to an artificial world within a no less artificial island.

When we rose in the morning the sun glued to the eastern horizon shone through the pines. The yellow light filled our room and filtered through the window, it painted a dark cross on the smooth wall next to the door. We looked at the morning paper which somebody had slipped in, skipped through the bad news and packed our suitcases. A Dakota was taking us to Frankfurt. When we left the room we saw that the dark cross on the wall had hardly changed its position.

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FROM ROME

The Mullah and His Eight Wives

THE Kinsey report came to mind again and again as I talked with an extraordinary man during the long hours of our train trip from the Caspian Sea to Teheran. My other companions were a group of Persian General Staff officers and we were just returning from a visit to the Russian border. We had, as a matter of fact, had enough of military and political problems, even though the trip itself was exceedingly interesting.

The man I refer to was a "mullah," a sort of Mohammedan priest, and he boarded the train at a small station, with quite a number of servants and friends seeing him off. Their behavior left no doubt about the fact that he was a wealthy man. He wore a long white garment with a black cloak over it. He settled down comfortably in a corner of our compartment, taking off his shoes and crossing his legs on the seat in the Oriental way. He seemed to be about fifty years of age with intelligent blue eyes and a grey beard.

Soon he was engaged in an animated conversation with my companions, who later acted as interpreters between him and me. He turned out to be not only quite a wealthy man, but even the happy husband of eight wives, the four regular ones allowed by the Koran and four others with less rights. I started to ask him some questions. What opinion, I wondered, could a man like this have of the woman as female and as human being? He ought, at any rate, to be able to speak from some experience.

★

I WAS not to be disappointed. His obviously quite sincere and straightforward replies revealed a fantastic mentality—fantastic, at least, to a Western mind. And he, in turn, was quite eager to know about the situation in the West.

First I asked him what he thought of a man who not only treats his wife as an equal, but even takes her into his confidence and asks her advice in difficult situations of their common life, that is, a man who treats his wife as a companion and friend.

He smiled. "I think," he said, "that a husband like that is not even worthy to be called a man. Did not one of your philosophers, I believe it was Aristotle, say that woman is nothing but 'an abortive male'? It is exceedingly hard in life to find a man who is able to give you advice in difficult situations and in whom you can have confidence. How could you then possibly expect that of a woman?"

WITHOUT even giving me time to reply he went on, displaying with evident pleasure his wisdom, the fruit, he said, of a long and strenuous experience.

"Don't marry a woman under sixteen years of age or above thirty," he said. "Those fourteen years, with slight differences from individual to individual, are the whole life of a woman. Before that period she is nothing but a stupid child and after it she is nothing but a shadow of a woman and will forever live in the past, will live to remember those years, as one who is dead remembers his earthly existence."

I could not help smiling and he seemed to read my thoughts and went on again.

"Believe me," he said, "the situation is exactly the same with your women in the West, in spite of the appearances. Your middle-aged and even elderly women, with their bright make-up, are living in the past, too, and the beauty parlors cannot make anything else out of them but nice mummies. Even the most successful of your professional middle-aged women, even if they receive the compliments of male colleagues for their performances, secretly envy the young girl, however stupid she might be, because she is desired by a man, that is, she is still alive."

The Persian officers who intently listened to him nodded gravely. All of a sudden he got down to something closer to his own personal situation.

"That does not mean," he said, "that one's elderly wives are useless. On the contrary, they acquire, over the years, great experience around the household and they are keen to defend the common husband's interests. Of course the husband has to develop a great deal of diplomacy in order to prevent quarrels among his wives, which is not impossible if he avoids treating them as his equal. And if one of them behaves badly he can always repudiate her."

★

WHAT he meant was that the elderly wives had their value as faithful unpaid servants. A new wife, he went on, usually ceases to be physically attractive to her husband after two children, or if she hasn't any, after roughly four years of married life. Then the time has come for the husband to change because a man needs to live in a sort of permanent honeymoon, with new objects to stimulate his desire. In his own case his new wives had been presented to him by their fathers, who, in the ritual of presentation, said "they wanted to be related to him," after they had first ascertained that the girl pleased him. Her own will was of no importance.

A man living in a permanent honeymoon will keep fit and be able to remarry until his late age, said the mullah. But he was absolutely against any sort of birth control or use of contraceptives, not for religious reasons but only because he believed that a man derives the greatest pleasure from a woman if he approaches her mainly in the periods when she is most apt to conceive. It was only the man's egocentric pleasure that was of importance to him. He had the same attitude as many of the ancient Greeks for whom Eros, the god of pleasure, was everything and the woman an anonymous instrument.

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He showed the same indifference for the children. He had himself not more than sixteen sons, he said, and as many more had died as infants; the number of daughters he did not exactly remember, but in any case there were, as he put it, more than a dozen.

We were interrupted at this point by a waiter who brought us lunch, with several bottles of ice-cold beer. Then, when the waiter had gone, I turned to the mullah and I found him, to my great surprise, sound asleep. The Persian officers smiled and one of them explained to me in French, which we knew the mullah did not understand, that he only feigned sleep in order to avoid seeing us drink an alcoholic beverage, which is forbidden by the Koran. In fact, as soon as the beer was finished he woke up again, as keen as ever.

★

HE STARTED right away to ask questions about conditions in the West. He was absolutely convinced that divorce was a loophole to allow Westerners to avoid the "silly laws" about monogamy. He considered the Mohammedan system much more handy and less expensive, since one's old wives, as he said, cost less when they are kept at home, where they are even able to do useful work. He got quite a shock when he heard that Catholics cannot divorce if they wish to stick to their religion. He said he had heard about it, but had not been able to believe it. Then he was surprised again to hear how many Catholics there were in the world, constituting, as they do, the biggest homogeneous religious community existing. He asked again, half incredulously, and was finally convinced.

What seemed most extraordinary to him was the fact that among Catholics the woman holds a more privileged position than she does in other Christian denominations and that to Catholics children are enormously important. He seemed disturbed by the fact that the man, the husband, is not alone the central figure. He was puzzled by the importance given to the mother as an imperfect human symbol of the Mother of God. He tried hard for a while to understand and then he said: "By Allah, it seems to me a religion which must be ideal for women. In what other community could they dream of enjoying such adbantages?" GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN.

MR. KUMLIEN'S article, "A Kind of Miracle," which appeared in the July 14 issue of THE COMMONWEAL and dealt with the founding, by an Italian priest, of a settlement for orphan children, was reprinted in the November *Reader's Digest,* under the title, "The Mad Priest of Nomadelphia." We have received a number of inquiries for the exact address where contributions can be sent to help the settlement. The following is the full address.

Don Walter
Piccoli Apostoli
Citta' di Nomadelfia
Carpi (Modena)
Italy

THE LABOR MOVEMENT

The Menace of the Guest Speaker

A FEW weeks ago I went through a shattering experience: I was a delegate to the Massachusetts state CIO convention.

At the opening session a Catholic Bishop gave the invocation and a short speech. He said, "Every delegate has a moral responsibility not to doze during this convention." But the Bishop did not know what he was demanding of mere flesh and blood. Any delegate who did not doze at least once during that convention was a man of iron.

During the next two-and-a-half days a total of 23—repeat, 23—guest speakers addressed the delegates. They took up about nine of the convention's 11 hours of working time. A few of them, by reason of prominence, oratory or lung power, were able to hold the attention of the delegates. If the others had been lesser men, their self-confidence would have been shattered by the reception they received. The delegates whispered, talked, walked around, read newspapers, caucused in the aisles or just plain dozed.

In contrast to the number of guest speakers the number of rank-and-file delegates who got up on the floor to discuss issues before the convention was exactly four. By the time the guest speakers were through, on Sunday morning, there were about 90 delegates left in the hall out of an original 625. A naive young man who had bided his time got up to propose a constitutional amendment. The chairman advised him to mail it to the executive board so that it could be taken up next year. The young man then made a motion to instruct the officers to schedule not more than ten guest speakers at the next convention. A more practical sympathizer moved an amendment for "15 guest speakers." Both the amendment and the main motion were defeated. Let no one say that those delegates couldn't take it. They had apparently taken so much that they were punch drunk and incapable of defending themselves from similar poundings in the future.

★

THE amazing thing is that 625 delegates showed up for this fiasco. They came because they expected to see a big election fight for the top offices. Even in this they were frustrated. The international president of one union and the regional director of another pulled a few ropes backstage and a unity team emerged from the wings with fixed smiles on their faces as though that was the way they had wanted it all the time.

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There was a swell demonstration when the president was renominated. Noisemakers were distributed beforehand just to make sure. There were streamers and banners and signs and an accordion-player to grab the mike and strike up, "So-and-So is our leader, we shall not be moved." I have rarely seen enthusiasm so well organized.

I think our state CIO convention was worse than most, even the AFL affairs, but it is an example, however extreme, of a sad and dangerous tendency in the CIO.

The CIO started as a reaction, a revolt, against the hardened bureaucracy of the AFL. John L. Lewis was a hardened bureaucrat himself and he pulled out of the CIO too when he found that he couldn't have his own way. But the big reason the CIO was able to organize industries which had never been organized before was that it captured the imaginations of the young and eager. It was a movement of idealists and messiahs.

★

SOME of the messiahs began peddling poisoned religions and it became necessary to get tough and throw them out. But now the comrades are gone. What are the CIO leaders afraid of now? More and more their conventions are going the way of the political convention: all the speaking from the platform down to the sheep-like delegates and all the decisions made in the smoke-filled room by a few big wheels.

It may be necessary in politics, I don't know. I do know it is neither necessary nor desirable in the labor movement. A union delegate is not a sheep nor is he, generally speaking, a political hack. He is a man who thinks and can say what he thinks, and wants to say what he thinks, when he is given a chance.

Sooner or later every labor leader has to make up his mind about democracy, in the most practical way, and decide for himself whether it is a good thing or a bad thing. I don't mean democracy in the vague sense of American government as opposed to Russian government.

I mean things like: "Shall I make a conscientious effort to live up to the constitution of this union? Shall I give the opposition every reasonable break? Shall I call membership meetings regularly and allow full freedom of expression? Between membership meetings shall I consult the executive board on major decisions?"

The tendency of the human animal who finds himself in a position of power is to conclude that he is in that position because he knows so much more than the rank-and-file member. Nothing could be further from the truth. The rank-and-filer knows plenty. And sometimes, even when he knows little but his own name, he still knows enough to see that the man at the top is not God. And every man at the top needs to have this simple fact pointed out to him about once a month on the average.

Even a corrupt opposition is better than no opposition at all. Opposition stirs up interest and it stirs up the blood. It stimulates the mind and the adrenal glands. It keeps the leadership awake and on their toes. It affords an opportunity for the young rebels to serve some useful purpose other than criticizing their relatives and beating up their friends in the local boxing club.

It is not just Fourth-of-July oratory, the claim that democracy is more efficient and dynamic than Communism or Fascism. Most people are content to think that democracy is pleasanter to live under. It is more than that. It is because dictatorship is so dull that the dictators must always be staging demonstrations and wars to keep the people and themselves interested. Democracy is by its nature vital, alive, because it feeds on free discussion and the free pulling and hauling of its composite parts. Anything can be said and anything can happen. A democratic organization will remain interesting as long as man is interesting.

Communism is no longer much of a problem in the CIO, but Fascism is. There is something of the Fascist in all of us. It is Fascism to despise the rank-and-file, to treat them as less than men, as less than sons of God. It is Fascism to seek always for the unanimous resolution and the unity slate. It is Fascism to believe that the fuehrer always knows best. It is Fascism to laugh at constitutions and parliamentary procedure.

There was another thing that the Bishop said. He said, "In so far as this convention succeeds, democracy succeeds and grows stronger. And in so far as this convention fails, democracy fails and grows weaker."

It was a wise statement. As a result of that convention democracy is weaker in our state CIO today. It is a question how many such conventions we can afford.

JOHN C. CORT.

Communications

The Use of Force

Medford, Mass.

TO THE EDITORS: As a regular reader (and warm admirer) of THE COMMONWEAL, I hope you will permit me to enter an objection to your reply to the letter from Miss Dorothy Day (December 29, 1950). I refer not so much to the discussion of pacifism as to the inference of your editor regarding Miss Day's condemnation of the regime in Southern Korea. The corruption, brutality and moral bankruptcy of the Syngman Rhee government contributed in no small measure to its internal weakness and inefficiency. To recognize this is in no way to reflect upon our defense of Southern Korea against armed aggression. But it is, I suggest, a very necessary prelude to any realistic and lasting settlement in Korea or indeed (as THE COMMONWEAL itself has pointed out so wisely regarding the Philippines and Indo-China) in any area affected by the challenge of nationalism, social reform, and Communism.

Your contemporary, *America,* (November 4, 1950) contains a very revealing study of the general nature of the Rhee regime. I do not believe it is quite fair to

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accuse Miss Day of equating the causes of the Asian people with Stalinist Imperialism. She seems to me to perform a valuable service in calling attention to the disastrous policy pursued by our military and political leaders. Your figures from the report of Mr. Dulles (hardly an unprejudiced observer) do not stack up very well beside the very careful, thorough and impartial study by Porfessor McCune in his *Korea Today*: had his prophetic advice been followed, the present crisis might have been avoided. It is also well to remember that land reform on paper is hardly the same thing as the actuality; and, indeed, adequate and sweeping reforms were being constantly sabotaged by the Rhee Executive, serving—as it did—the landlord class and its interests. (With the illegal entrance of Rhee's administration, fast on the heels of U. S. troops invading the North, Dr. Rhee even proposed to *restore* distributed land to its old owners, most of whom were residing in the South of necessity.) Finally, I think Miss Day's general position deserves a far more thoughtful consideration than it is given by your editorial, especially in view of the disastrous failure of our Korean venture.

CHARLES H. WHITTIER
Tufts College
School of Religion

New York, N. Y.

TO THE EDITORS: . . . I would like it understood that the pacifist does not "accept unjust aggression submissively," but feels quite justified, even impelled, to resist, provided the resistance is non-violent, and that evil means are not used to achieve the end, which is peace. Now if the editors of THE COMMONWEAL will agree that the means used to achieve an end will quite often determine that end, then surely they will recognize as valid the pacifist argument that wholesale annihilation will never bring peace. Refusal to participate in slaughter does not necessarily mean one has adopted an "indifferent" attitude toward the problem, but rather, just the opposite. The pacifist attitude is a positive, concrete one. Miss Day's unspoken premise was *not* that force is un-Christian, but that *violence* is un-Christian. And I certainly agree with her. . . .

If war, and especially modern war, were simply armed resistance in the face of wanton aggression, then perhaps the pacifist position would not be as compelling as it is. But the statement in your editorial that physical violence is not necessarily connected with moral evil is not very convincing. One cannot help recalling Hiroshima . . . all this makes one realize how academic is the argument. . . .

But what have all these arguments to do with total destruction? What is one to do then if, by repulsing the aggressor, one is involved in the murder of the innocent? Should we try to kid ourselves, as the editors of THE COMMONWEAL seem to be doing, into thinking that this time we will "make the world safe for democracy"? What are we to do? This seems the unspoken, despairing cry these days. For me, thanks to Dorothy Day and *The Catholic Worker*, the way is quite clear.

RICHARD DONNELLY.

THE COMMONWEAL, in that editorial, was not arguing the case for or against pacifism, as we clearly said. We were merely stating that for us, as for many Christians, the way is not quite so clear. We have not taken the pacifist position as the Christian ideal and therefore were unwilling to plead guilty to Miss Day's accusation that we had given "a perfect example of secularism" when we accepted the role of armies in resisting the evil of Communist aggression.

THE EDITORS.

St. Paul, Minnesota

TO THE EDITORS: . . . Regarding Dorothy Day's statement about our partnership in Oriental exploitation, I agree that this must stop. But not our freedom to work for such a goal. . . .

JOHN M. SISSON.

Misnomer

Peosta, Iowa.

TO THE EDITORS: Your title "COMMONWEAL" seems to be a misnomer. Since you do business in the United States one naturally supposes you have the interests of this country at heart. The contrary, however, is evident from your editorials and from some of your articles. These reflect the international standpoint and mind. You are more interested in England and France and the infamous Tito regime than you are in Mr. and Mrs. Public, USA. You sneer at the Brooklyn *Tablet* and the Chicago *Tribune* and Fulton Lewis and Senator McCarthy and Herbert Hoover and General MacArthur, and you fawn on a Communist like Attlee. . . . Perhaps, like Berdyaev, you think "nationalism should be condemned as a heresy by the Christian Chuch" and perhaps you think with him "the Catholic Church is not far from pronouncing this verdict."

You and others of like stripe, who have brought this wonderful country to the verge of ruin—you and people like Acheson and Frankfurter and Lowenthal and Truman and Hiss and Remington and Marshall and Roosevelt—you may be sincere, but you are not realistic and you have done your utmost to wreck the United States. England and France, et al, may need us, but we certainly don't need them. You have joined with bigots and Communists and pro-Communists to aid the Satanic power of Russia. Even a smattering of history and geography would tell you nationalism is natural to man and cannot be destroyed. . . .

(*Professor*) EDWARD M. GALLAGHER

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The Stage

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

DIRECTOR Robert Lewis and performers Frederic March and Morris Carnovsky have been extraordinarily astute in deciding to play Ibsen's vigorous old broadside for what it is: an inconclusive but passionate debate. Instead of treating it as though it were a play, with the accent of life about it, they have gone hammer and tongs after its polemics, and the result is one of the most exciting exercises in stump rhetoric to blast out the back walls of a New York theatre in a long time. March and Carnovsky have not tried to create characters where only types, and even tintypes, exist; March has settled for a two-dimensional finesse which curdles the blood. Together they give not only the loudest performances of the season, but in many ways the most stimulating. The placid naturalism which dominates our stage has caused us to forget how exciting sheer vocal intensity can be, and it is interesting to watch the audience respond, decibel for decibel. The curtain calls for "An Enemy of the People" are as vociferous as the performance, and I can only urge you to see it before professional laryngitis sets in.

None of this is to say that the play, as a play, has undergone any spectacular improvement. Arthur Miller has put the dialogue into contemporary and acceptable English, but he has done nothing—and it is doubtful that there is anything he could do—to remove the ambiguity which necessarily pursues the drama of ideas. The trouble is that ideas are abstractions, and men are not. The moment a character with any pretensions to individuality is asked to represent some abstract social or political idea, either he becomes less a man or the idea itself begins to lose its general applicability. The thoroughgoing ideologist is usually willing to sacrifice the man and preserve the purity of his thought by making the characters as abstract as the thought is. This was the method of the morality playwrights, with their figures of Lust, Envy, and Greed, or of the German expressionists, with their figures X, Y, and Z. However, when the ideologist is also something of an artist, as Ibsen was, he finds himself unable to resist the creation of personal, and hence unique, character, and he winds up putting on the stage something that is half-man, half-symbol. The audience is now thrown into a state of bewilderment as to which half is speaking at any given moment. Is the character acting out of personal idiosyncrasy, or is his current attitude to be taken seriously as the considered thought of the author? When, in "An Enemy of the People," Dr. Stockmann announces that democracy as we know it is unworkable, are we to take this as some personal excess on his part—he has been characterized as excessive in certain other ways—or are we to accept it as the precise message of the play? How uncertain our reactions must be is indicated in another passage: when the small businessman delivers a short and forceful speech on the need for moderation, the audience breaks into firm applause. A few moments later the man is revealed as a hypocrite. We are left a little shamefaced, if not actually biting our nails. Was the speech true, and the man only subsequently weak? Or was the weakness of the man inherent in the speech which we were trapped into applauding? Unfortunately, there is no resolution of the dilemmas posed by the idea-play short of the author's accompanying the performance with a lecture in which he explains how much of any given moment is personality and how much propaganda. Lacking the presence of the author, or the printed Preface which was Shaw's substitute for this need, we are forced to fend for ourselves, constantly struggling to interpret the play on several levels at once, and constantly denied any assurance that we have done so correctly. What may be said of characterization in this respect must also be said of situation. The dramatist must perforce invent a situation for his characters—in this case the struggle of a doctor to close down some polluted bathing waters on which his community is getting rich—but again the isolated and highly selective episode is not fully representative of the complex social conclusions which are forcibly derived from it, and the action must always strain for greater significance than in fact it contains. This adds to the ambiguity of the play an occasional air of pretentiousness, if not downright foolishness, and it is a fortunate thing indeed that the Messrs. March and Carnovsky are at hand and high pitch. They carry us over the endless question-marks of the play by the virtuosity and astonishing vigor of their performances, and I would not want you to miss them. (*At the Broadhurst.*)

★

CAPTAIN BRASSBOUND'S CONVERSION

THE City Center has given a two-week stand to this early and minor Shaw, and Edna Best is gracious and winning in the role originally written for, and to some degree about, Ellen Terry. The balance of the company is not so expert, City Center's casting and rehearsal limitations being what they are, and a good many Shavian lines and minor situations are not worked for anything like full value. Even so, we have been provided with an opportunity to see a little-done piece, and I doubt that a Shaw play exists in which there is not something agreeable. Shaw improves as we come to take him less and less seriously; we have given over worrying about his meaning and are at last able to concentrate on his wit. (*Closed at the City Center.*)

WALTER KERR.

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The Screen

BED OF NEUROSES

IF YOU don't examine the characters too carefully, you'll find *Halls of Montezuma* a rousing, well-made picture about a company of Marines taking over a Japanese-held island in the South Pacific. Lewis Milestone has directed it expertly, and the realistic fighting scenes are fraught with tense excitement. You become fully aware of the dangers through which our men went as the members of Company B land on this island and make their slow way across it against stiff Japanese opposition. But "Halls of Montezuma," fitting into the current trend of realistic war pictures that examine a cross-section of a particular group, goes one step further in exposing the men's psyches; and you soon come to the conclusion that most of our Marines were more than a little neurotic. Actually, of course, you know that this isn't true, but by a peculiar quirk of emphasis in Michael Blankfort's script, the camera concentrates pretty heavily on men who need an analyst—but quick.

Our main hero is a lieutenant (well played by Richard Widmark) who is "fighting the war with his head in a vice of pain." He is suffering from migraine which resulted, so we are told, from his being scared so often and not running. A flashback shows us how, when he was a high-school teacher, he cured one of his pupils of stuttering. This young man (Richard Hylton), now a corporal in his company, gets the jitters and Widmark cures them again by reminding him that "hope is the mother of all men." With some of the other incipient psychotics, Widmark is not so successful. One particularly unpleasant Marine called Pretty Boy (Skip Homeier) has an obsession to be something big some day; he also has such a deep-rooted hatred for the Japanese (because his sister married one) that he goes berserk and attempts to shoot some highly valued Jap prisoners whom the officers hope to question. So then his pal, an ex-boxer (Jack Palance), kills him. I tell you these Marines are an edgy lot and not to be trusted with guns or themselves. Actually this film could have got around its strange emphasis on its neurotic fighters by giving us more of the normal boys. We know that many men cracked up under pressure, but we also know that many more didn't; and we are fully aware that the Marines were and are brave fighters with human instincts and the sense to know when to be scared and run. Except for its psychological excesses, "Halls of Montezuma" is a sincere and interesting war film. I don't think it will do any permanent hurt to the Marines' fine reputation; nor will individual members of the Corps demand letters of apology.

★

ANOTHER new movie having to do with fighting methods errs in the opposite direction. It is true

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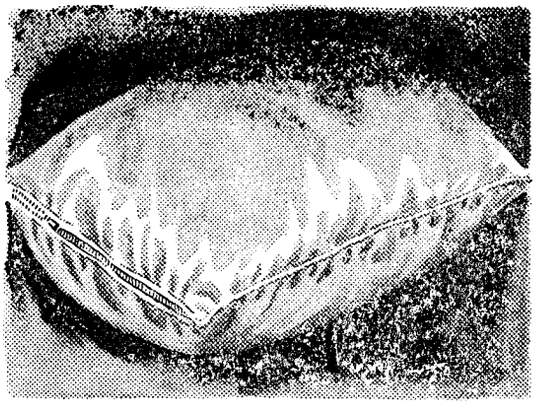

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that when the hero of *The Flying Missile* slips into a psychological funk a few human qualities are injected into the plot, but on the whole this film about submarines and guided missiles is so static that most of it is little more than an illustrated lecture. I'm sure, however, that youngsters—and perhaps a few oldsters who are also interested in the subject—will get quite a kick out of the efforts of Commander Bill Talbot (Glenn Ford) to launch missiles from his sub.

The shots of the Missile Test Center at Point Mugu, California, and the experiments made there by Bill and his crew are educational if not especially cinematic. Audiences may wonder why the admiral's secretary in such a hush-hush place is a foreigner, but males, even those of the pre-teen age, will admit Viveca Lindfors plays this girl very attractively. "The Flying Missile" isn't giving away any vital information to our foes—unless it is the fact that Army and Navy red tape discourages even the most inventive of our stalwart heroes.

★

AUDIENCES who like their military movies on the fanciful, musical-comedy side may possibly take to *West Point Story*. I, for one, found the plot so ridiculous and James Cagney's acting so much like a middle-aged Mickey Rooney that I lost interest early in the game—in spite of the charms of Virginia Mayo and Doris Day, who try desperately to compete with Cagney's mugging. Jimmy goes up to West Point to help the cadets stage a show and to win Gordon MacRae away from the Army and into the theatrical business. The story and jokes are stretched pretty thin when Jimmy, who believes that West Point is a factory for putting square heads into brass hats, actually becomes a cadet to get the feel of the place. Gene Nelson's dancing and some of the musical numbers provide good entertainment; but the picture's dull spots are very dull indeed, and you find yourself working too hard to help the cast out of their embarrassing predicament.

★

THE English have sent over another of those unpretentious little items without star names but with good solid cinema stuff that keeps you on the edge of your chair. *The Blue Lamp* could have been called "A Policeman's Lot" except for the fact that its material about the life of hard-working bobbies is by no means taken lightly. After a sort of March-of-Time opening that shows how an English policeman spends his day, the film swings into action and settles down to a specific case.

We get to know some of the bobbies quite well during the first part of the film, and when one of the youthful villains kills a particularly nice policeman who is about to retire, our emotions get a real work-out during the pursuit. The finale at the dog races is as exciting as anything movies ever offer. This is the kind of a thriller you can safely take your kids to; you'll enjoy it and respect it even more than they do.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

The Science of Machiavelli

By SERGE HUGHES

OUT of necessity a number of our ideas are make-shift constructions, provisional platforms just solid enough to bear the weight of impatient thoughts, rickety spy-towers just high enough to offer steady distorted perspectives. Such make-shift ideas are not confined to trivia, to the small change involved in important transactions. They can and often do deal with serious issues, and like buffers completely block out the complexities of a problem, consequently the problem itself.

It is this approach, for example, which has dissolved the complexity of Machiavelli. According to some he is the most perceptive and courageous of thinkers; to others he is the most wicked and insidious of men. And as long as any of those make-shift ideas, intolerant of all but a glib common sense, insert themselves between a problem and the intelligence, not only will the problems of Machiavelli's thought never be solved, but there is a good chance that they will never be seen. Make-shift constructions will not do; mouthed platitudes, whether pious or immoral, will not disclose the inner form of Machiavelli's thought.

This need for a more sober appreciation of Machiavelli has been brilliantly satisfied by a superb English edition of *The Discourses of Machiavelli* (*Yale University Press.* $15. *Translated and with an introduction and notes by Leslie Walker,* S.J.). For this two-volume work, complete with subject and name index, is not only an excellent translation of a work difficult to find in English, but it includes some 160 pages of sustained analysis in what is rather too modestly termed an Introduction. It is the analysis of what is the truly great originality of Machiavelli, his attempt to discover historical laws valid for all times through an empirical method, and of the success of that method. To lose sight of this central and binding interest of Machiavelli, Father Walker makes clear, is to misunderstand with great thoroughness the meaning of the Florentine.

The Prince, for example. The common opinion of this tract, which considers it as a guide book for tyrants, has done most to account for Machiavelli's reputation as a demonic creator of a new morality of power. This either-or conclusion is held not only by the average man but also by a good number of distinguished historians and philosophers, and, quite interestingly, by men of action such as Frederick the Great, Charles V, and Richelieu.

SERGE HUGHES *teaches modern languages at St. John's University in Brooklyn.*

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What was clear to all was that *The Prince* was a tract on how to maintain and preserve political power at any cost; what seemed to be implicit was that survival at any cost was the highest possible good. It was only a step further for some readers of the last half of the nineteenth century, on the strength of Machiavelli's admiration for Cesare Borgia, to see in *The Prince* the embodiment of a Renaissance Superman ideal. Thus the secretary of Republican Florence, the man of ardent republican conviction and a declared hater of tyrants, was distorted to the point where his fame rested on his being the brilliant recorder of "what oft was done, but ne'er so well expressed."

★

THOUGH greeted with horror and disgust on its publication, *The Prince* was widely read and to this day continues to be so. Father Walker suggests that the universal repulsion which greeted the book was a sign that the times were not as corrupt as some would have it. Less charitable people would suggest, however, that the repulsion was the horror of recognition. At any rate, while *The Prince* quickly achieved fame, if not notoriety, *The Discourses* remained relatively unread.

But it is only through *The Discourses* that the concept of the value of survival in politics is clarified. In them is recognized the need of distinguishing between what should be and what is. It is the Discourses which explain quite fully the meaning of the frequently recurring term "must" in *The Prince,* "what one must do . . . what one must not do." For in *The Prince* there is no talk of the end justifies the means, no consideration of morality except as a factor which may affect success or failure in the preservation of power. Those themes which are overt issues in *The Discourses* are the very ones that are ignored in *The Prince.* To compare the two works, then, is to suspect what a more careful study will convincingly disclose: *The Prince* is a work of technique. Though it closes with a fiery appeal for Italian unity, its true tone is not that of a mentor to his charge but that of a surgeon lecturing to a group of medical students before a dissected body. There is an analogy between a doctor's indifference to the sickness he is studying, be it syphilis or cancer, and Machiavelli's elaboration of the technique on how to preserve power, whether it be that of a tyrant or a statesman.

It is frightening to realize that as early as the first part of the sixteenth century an attempt was made to study the political action of man exclusively from a pragmatic point of view, with a view only to its smooth functioning: political relations considered as a machine, in which the purpose of the machine is irrelevant, be it to cut heads or slices of bread. The measure of success is to be the order achieved, a necessarily external order brought about by expediency. Since expediency is substantially a sloppy idea, Father Walker does not find it difficult to demonstrate that what is expedient is far from necessarily contributing to the maintenance of order. This criticism of the notion of expediency, Walker ob-

Next Week We Publish

PORTRAIT OF BLOY
by Elfride Dubois

It is well known to be very difficult to write calmly about Leon Bloy. People tend either to be so repelled or so attracted that they lose their balance. The author of this book keeps hers better than most—perhaps because she is about equally repelled and attracted. $2.00. January 25th.

Two Notable Reprints:

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by E. I. Watkin ($6.00)
and
IN DEFENCE OF PURITY
by Dietrich von Hildebrand ($2.50)

We hope everyone will want them as badly now that they are available as they did when they were not.

On Ash Wednesday We Publish

EVERYBODY CALLS ME FATHER
by Father X

You will be hearing more of this: it's about his first five years in the priesthood by a young priest who can write, and who is not unduly serious about anything. (He is duly serious about his priesthood, of course.) $2.25.

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by Msgr. Ronald Knox

On what we should know of Our Lord if we had no Gospels, only St. Paul's writings to go on. $1.75.

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST
by John of St. Thomas

A new translation of this spiritual classic, made by an American Dominican, Father Dominic Hughes. $3.75.

The Knox LATIN-ENGLISH MISSAL which, to our shame and horror, went out of stock before Christmas, will be back again by the end of this month. Now that we know what an awful lot of people want it, we shall do our very best never to let it go out of stock again. The prices remain, $10.00 black leather, red edges; $12.00, black leather, gold edges; $15.00, morocco; $25.00 sealskin.

Order books from your bookstore

The whole of our spring list will be in the forthcoming TRUMPET—if you don't get it or have moved since the last one came out, write to Lucy MacGill. The TRUMPET comes free and postpaid.

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serves, is the only legitimate criticism which can be made of *The Prince.*

But technology implies science, and what this science, this method is, is elaborated in *The Discourses,* in which Machiavelli speaks with confidence of founding an original empirical science of human nature, based on past and present history, valid for all men at all times: *scientia sub specie aeternitatis.* By history he means a small segment of the history of the Roman Empire and of the Italian Republics of his time. But no such exactness is evident in his idea of human nature. He recognized in human nature the possibility of performing good acts, acknowledged that the end of government was the common good and not the conservation of power, and justified tyrants only as necessary evils. He was deeply aware of the cowardice and selfishness of men, constantly witnessed the spectacle of rulers who valued survival above all, even in its most atrocious forms, and felt the fascination of the ruthless tyrants of his century. His interest in religion never went past the social implication of religion, religion as an *instrumentum regni,* and he did not take any interest in its truth or falsity. One does not have to be a Christian in order to see the limited value of Machiavelli's religious thought.

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THIS conflict between what Machiavelli conceived in the realm of speculation and what he experienced in practice was as strident as the conflict he felt between the corruption among the clergy and laity and the idea of the eternal truth and divinity of the Church. And, similar to the way in which he purposefully ignored the depths of religion in order to understand it fully when utilized as an instrument for rule and for morality, he chose to abandon a search for the theory of government in order to grasp its actuality. In place of theory, practice. The fact, not the idea. Machiavelli thus stands as the first great positivist, among the first who considered science as the knowledge of the Fact.

Judged by empirical standards, the method which Machiavelli elaborated has the merit of most such systems: a number of brilliant insights, such as his comments on the need of gradual change for a people unaccustomed to political liberty. The method suffers, as his contemporaries noticed, from a certain type of romanticism, the holding up of the past, the Roman Empire, as a constant norm for the present. The whole, however, is greater than the sum of the parts, and it is the spirit of Machiavelli's method or science, and not the individual errors or omissions, which condemns it.

This is the awesome tragedy of Machiavelli's thought: it was capable of visualizing an autonomous technique, *The Prince,* and a method which could never eliminate its contradictions but created for its author the illusion of unruffled objectivity.

Machiavelli perhaps never realized to what extent the attraction exercised by violent action vitiated his pretended scientific objectivity. He quite probably never realized how strong was his nostalgia for a past that was orderly and mighty. Yet these weaknesses become insignificant compared to the terrifying illusion which obsessed him. It was the illusion, probably fostered by a desperate craving for unity and order, that man could be studied with the detachment with which one studies a clinical fact—as if the soul of man were like a monstrous onion which one can examine, calmly peeling off one layer after another, until the morphology is completely evident and nothing remains but a tiny watery center. It was this belief that impelled him to conceive of the treatise on technique, *The Prince,* and it was this conviction that made him envision the possibility of finding laws of human nature, anteceding by a century the studies of Galileo to determine the laws of Nature.

★

THERE is at this point a curious touching of opposites. Just as some have taken refuge from the world in make-shift ideas and platitudes, so have a number of men relinquished the moral quest because of a sense of bewilderment and fatigue, and have immersed themselves in the study of a technique, hoping to find there some numb rest. That the technique embodied in *The Prince* fails by its own yardstick of expediency does not frighten them. Nor does their knowledge that it is possible for technique to destroy, completely deter them. They are men who would abdicate themselves. They are the poorest, most distant descendants of Machiavelli.

It would be reassuring to look back on *The Discourses* with a note of confidence that we have learned many lessons from Machiavelli. Regrettably, only one hundred years after Machiavelli, a major European thinker could calmly announce his intention to study man and his passions as he would theorems and axioms. The tendency has continued to our day. But our tragedy today is greater, for the men who direct the process today have never read Machiavelli, nor care to read him. For them, a new translation of *The Discourses* has no meaning. For us it stands as a sober warning and reminder. The times are evil.

Of Note

A New World

THE most recent issue of *The Third Hour* (P. O. Box No. 6, Lenox Hill Station, 221 East 70th Street, New York 21) carries an excerpt from the posthumous papers of Nicholas Berdyaev.

> I would not say that the epochs of night are the least important in human history. They are difficult, to be sure; but in a certain sense, the sky can be seen more clearly at night than during the day.
>
> We witness the end of an old world, an evolution which, however, did not start today. And this

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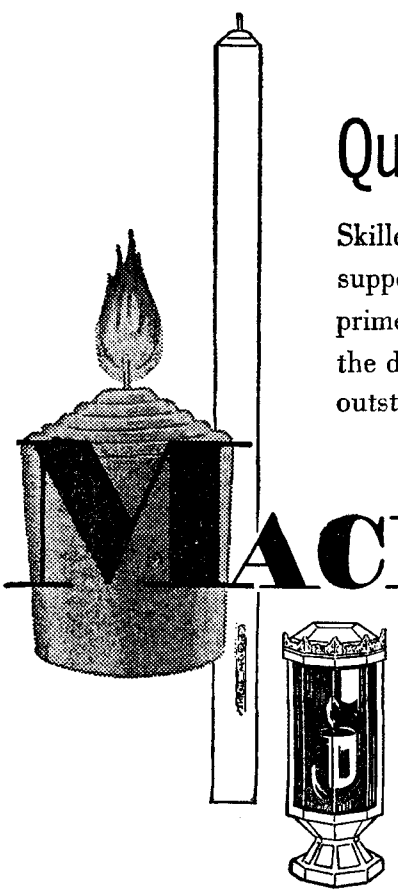
evolution can go on for a long time. We often speak of a new world to be born in the place of the one which is dying. We say that this new world will be either communism, or national-socialism. I believe that this is a mistake, that neither the Communist experience as it was realized in Russia, nor the National-Socialist experience as it was realized in Germany, represents this new world. They are spasmodic movements, the convulsions of a disintegrating world, and not the creative beginning of something new. We have totalitarian dictatorships, but totalitarian dictatorship is the result of an inner anarchy into which the world is threatened to be plunged.

It is because the world has fallen into this inner anarchy, where there is no longer any unity in religious belief nor in external forms, that the world has recourse to a regime of dictatorship which implies an ideology imposed from above. It is the government which enforces a certain world-conception. But this means precisely that there is no inner unity in the world. And this is the great difference with the Middle Ages. Because in the Middle Ages, there was truly an inner unity, a unity of religious belief, which predominated. In our time, this no longer exists. . . .

We face the following problem: is the future, the new world, created by way of fatality alone (and this is quite possible) or will there also be in the creation of this new world a share of human freedom, of human conscience, of human reason? And when I use the word 'freedom,' I take it in the profound sense of a spiritual principle, which is absolute in its value, more absolute than its contingent and relative political forms.

At the present time, the peoples, the masses, are attracted by slavery. This is what Dostoyevsky meant by the temptation of the Grand Inquisitor. Peoples renounce freedom of conscience, of thought, of judgment and they receive bread (this word being taken in the symbolic sense). They receive bread by renouncing freedom. And this temptation is favored by the fact that in the Old World which proclaimed itself free, freedom was often falsified, it was often but the privilege of certain classes; it was often formal and not real. The temptation will last as long as this disturbing question of bread —bread in a symbolic sense—will not have been solved. In other words, as long as the social question in the world will not have been solved *with* freedom, and not *against* freedom and *without* freedom. . . .

Old methods are no longer of any avail. We need something new. Historic Christianity adapted to the old period of history has not sufficient strength to struggle against the new demoniacal forces, because we behold things which had never been seen—great States obsessed by demons. We have at times the impression that Christianity is between two epochs.



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Books

From Napoleon to Stalin: Comments on European History. A. J. P. Taylor. Hamish Hamilton (British Book Centre). $3.

MR. TAYLOR is an historian, an Oxford don, and the author of several volumes on the history of continental Europe. He has also been an active commentator on contemporary affairs, and his "historian's detachment" has embroiled him in a series of controversies. In 1945 and 1946 he gave several talks on current affairs for the British Broadcasting Corporation. These were ended when Herbert Morrison called them anti-British and anti-American. In 1948 at the Communist-sponsored Congress of Intellectuals at Wroclaw, he and a handful of English and American delegates proceeded to disrupt the planned unanimity with a plea for intellectual freedom and mutual understanding.

His new book is a collection of articles previously published in English newspapers and periodicals on varied aspects of European history. They run the gamut from the attitude of French historians toward Napoleon, the legacies of the revolutions of 1848, and German nationalism, to the meaning of Munich, the disposition of Trieste, and the Tito-Stalin clash. If the book has no central theme, it nevertheless has a unified approach—an attempt to clarify post-war problems in the light of historical experience.

With the defeat of Nazism, the world hoped that it had seen the last of the menace of German nationalism. It was assumed that Germany would have a democratic government without any megalomaniacal visions of conquest. Mr. Taylor points out that democracy is not likely to be an automatic check on Greater German ambitions. Under the Empire, the unification of all Germans was one of the most popular demands of the masses; every step towards democracy became a step towards expansion. Only foreign occupation today prevents the immediate unification of Germany, and if the powers withdraw control, Germany may seek to restore the united Greater Germany of 1938. The only solution, Mr. Taylor suggests, is that by the time Germany resumes the government of its own affairs, the Great Powers be unified in purpose. A strong community of world interest will alone prevent renewed German aggression through the easy tactic of playing off East and West.

TO achieve the idyllic unity of interest among the Big Four, Mr. Taylor has a recipe. His basic assumption is that "the object of Soviet policy is security, based on a ring of buffer States and a Balance of Power beyond this ring," and that all Russia's warlike posturing springs from a sincere conviction that she stands in immediate peril of attack by the United States. Therefore, he concludes that Soviet friendship can be gained through hard, but fair, bargaining. If the West offered, as Hitler did in 1939, to sell the Soviet Union machine-tools, it could elicit favorable economic and political concessions, and the world would have peace for a long time to come.

Much of this argument has the musty smell of a long-closed mind. Although Mr. Taylor has little sympathy with Russian communism as a way of life, he is remarkably charitable toward its foreign ambitions. If that halcyon day ever existed when Soviet friendship could be bought with machinery, it is long past. In taking the long view, Mr. Taylor seems to have ignored all the recent evidence of Russia's aggressive intentions.

But the rest of the book has little of the archaic about it. The essays on 1848, and its consequences of social and national unrest, are keen and provocative. With sound knowledge of continental Europe, Mr. Taylor has drawn some striking inferences from Austrian, French, and German history. Unfortunately even such penetrating scholarship is no longer enough for a genuine understanding of European problems. The destiny of the continent will be largely determined by the titans on the perimeter, the United States and the Soviet Union, and in dealing with them, Mr. Taylor is out of his territory. When he says that European civilization will be ruined if it is "saved" by either Russia or America, the reader may easily doubt both his historical insight and his prided detachment.

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Mixed Company. Irwin Shaw. Random House. $3.75.

The Delicate Prey. Paul Bowles. Random House. $3.

IRWIN SHAW writes of the life and the places that are felt and known by most of us. He writes about the sensitive and politically-minded, decent, and still quite amoral men and women who, as the jacket says, are tightrope walkers in our time. His stories are usually not about large events, but about the episodes that have large moral or sentimental implications: the meetings of people whose lives, like geom-

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etry's curves, meet, separate, meet again, and inevitably separate again —the sentimental loves, the small lusts, the small tragedies. But this is also a serious problem for Shaw because the small tragedies are sometimes too small to bear the weight of his whole attention.

Some of his stories are about much bigger issues, usually about the Jew who lives under the pressures of New York City and of American anti-Semitism. This is a recurrent theme with its best-known expression in "Act of Faith." Shaw's way of masking important things—here a passionate desire for justice—in the small, seemingly inconsequential act, is strained in a good many of these stories because the indignation of the author shows through. He can't help but push to make the right thing (or the ironic wrong thing) happen.

But Shaw's stories are good, sound writing. The book gives me an impression of great solidity. Here is compassion, intellectual vitality, a command of detail: observed life, sound, music, absurdity—that Shaw is able to play upon as with an orchestra.

PAUL BOWLES' book has the distinction of being the least appropriate gift book published during the fall season. He writes about incidents that are experienced by few people because they are violent, unnatural acts usually occurring when a person from the Anglo-Saxon culture enters an Indian or Arab world. There is only one story in this collection that does not have to do with sadistic, abnormal, or psychotic acts. That is a warning issued to those readers who do not share Mr. Bowles' limited range of interests.

Bowles writes coolly and directly and with admirable simplicity. He describes what is happening but he does it rather distantly. It is like watching squid or other unpleasant creatures noiselessly moving behind the glass at the aquarium. One sees but does not comprehend. The author never takes off his rubber gloves, so he fails to touch life.

WILLIAM PFAFF.

Aspects of Japan's Labor Problems. Miriam S. Farley, with a Supplement by Wm. T. Moran. John Day. $3.50.

THIS book devotes only sixteen pages to one of the most terrible inflations in the history of Japan. It speaks of Occupation policy towards labor, and then describes the growth of the movement in terms of some of the outstanding struggles and "offensives" waged by the Communist-organized NCIU. The supplement written by Mr. Moran covers the period 1949-1950 when the Japanese employers recovered their sense of balance and began to fight back, when the Occupation deprived the government workers of their right to bargain collectively and take strike action, and when the Communists were in utter retreat and defeat.

The book, issued under the auspices of the Institute of Pacific Relations, does not pretend to be exhaustive. It is no history of the post-war labor movement. In fact, it is remarkable that both Miss

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Farley and Mr. Moran have such difficulty in even mentioning the Communist Party of Japan, let alone indicating that during the early days of the Occupation the Communists practically ran away with the labor movement. Miss Farley was in Japan early in the Occupation and her connection with the labor movement was peripheral. Mr. Moran worked only on the city and provincial levels, and had no intimate connections with the core of the labor movement.

Because of the lack of an intelligent explanation of the Communist role in post-war labor and the tactics and strategies of the party through the NCIU, the work fails to tell the really dramatic story of post-war labor in Japan.

RICHARD DEVERALL.

Pattern Divine. Patrick J. Temple. Herder. $5.00.

THIS is a book which does credit both to the piety and the diligence of its author. To his piety, for it is marked by an insight into the meaning of the Christ of God which reflects years of thought and meditation. To his diligence, for it succeeds in presenting a mass of detail upon the early years of Our Lord to an extent scarcely paralleled in other studies of present times.

Fr. Temple takes as his theme the events preceding the Birth of Christ and the hidden Life which followed, i.e., the thirty-odd years which are sketched so summarily for us in the first two chapters of the evangelists Matthew and Luke. Obviously, to fill out his more than 360 pages he has had to depend upon material other than those provided by the canonical gospels. But his acquaintance with the customs and archeology of Palestine and his knowledge of what modern scholars and Christian tradition have had to say on his subject, make it possible for him to put together an account which is commendable indeed.

No doubt there are slips in detail. Lands conquered by the Romans, he says, "were ruled by members of the senatorial class." He might have pointed out that territories of second rank, of which Judea is an example, were administered not by senators but by lesser officials of the equestrian order. And while it is legitimate to maintain that Rome left a great deal of civil jurisdiction in the hands of the Sanhedrin it should have been noted that this did not hold for all of Palestine. Fr. Temple seems to believe that the "Decretum Gelasii" is really the work of Pope Gelasius. Recent scholarship regards it rather as the product of a 6th century cleric writing in southern France.

Because Fr. Temple is generally judicious in adducing the thought of the past, it may be unfair to quarrel with his use of this or that authority. Still for myself, I do not see how the opinion of Saint Thomas Aquinas as to the Virgin Mother's having had the gift of miracles, though never used on earth, is capable of demonstration in any satisfactory fashion. Nor can I set much store upon the view of Saint Ambrose that Mary seldom left her home as a child "except to attend divine services in the company of her parents and kinsfolk" and that when she did go out there was "nothing gloomy in her eyes, nothing forward in her words, nothing unseemly in her acts." It may be so, of course, but let us admit frankly that the good bishop of Milan had no more to go upon in such questions than you and I.

HENRY G. J. BECK.

Concerning Mary Ann. Leo R. Ward, C.S.C. Ave Maria Press. $2.75.

THIS is the story of Mary Ann Cofflin, the daughter of parents who fled the potato famine in Ireland to settle in Iowa. Step by step, from Mary Ann's birth (here in this country), through her adolescence, her helping on the farm with the pigs and the corn-husking, her first dance, her courtship by, and early marriage to, Mart Murray, thence through the days of World War I, the depression and drought of the thirties, and, at the book's close, her widowhood, this is a full recording of pioneer life as lived by Mary Ann and the Irish about her in the Iowa town of Melrose.

The enormous labors of settlement, church-building and farming are faithfully recorded. This close concern with the community as a whole and with many minor characters occasionally pushes Mary Ann out of sight in her kitchen, but it is really Mart, Mary Ann's husband, who, toward the end of the book, takes the spotlight.

Father Ward doesn't offer those dramatic explosions that come when a writer deals directly with sin and violence, nor does he startle or disturb. It is not so easy to present the moving and dramatic in those who trod the straight and narrow. It takes the kind of artistry Father Ward has in abundance.

ALBERT EISELE.

•REVIEWERS

CAROL H. WEISS is an executive of a national service organization with headquarters in New York.

RICHARD DEVERALL has spent the post-war years largely in the Orient where he represented the American Federation of Labor in India and served on the staff of the Occupation government in Japan.

REV. HENRY G. J. BECK is a member of the faculty of the Immaculate Conception Seminary at Darlington, New Jersey.

ALBERT EISELE is a Minnesota farmer. He is the author of many short stories and conducts a newspaper column which appears in a number of rural papers.

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